

From Conversation to Interaction: A Pedagogical Exploration of Applying Conversation Analysis in EFL Classrooms

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Abstract

Within the communicative language teaching approach, current instructional materials often lack explicit guidance or fail to provide L2 learners with a wide range of resources in the target language. Conversation analysis (CA), which focuses on authentic talk, has been proposed as a potential resource for language classrooms. This study examines the effectiveness of using CA as a pedagogical approach in an EFL classroom and its impact on learners' attitudes toward English language learning. The study engaged eight adult learners in a structured program, encompassing a pre-test, a 4-week explicit CA-informed instruction, and a post-test. After four weeks, learners demonstrated progress in their knowledge and skills of interaction, different aspects of English speaking, interactional competence, and confidence in speaking English. Additionally, the CA-informed instruction positively influenced learners' attitudes toward English language learning and their appreciation of interactional features. The results strongly suggest that language teachers should consider incorporating CA insights into their teaching practices to enhance both linguistic and attitudinal outcomes.

Keywords: conversation analysis, CA-informed instruction, interactional competence, L2 interaction

Conversation analysis (CA), a significant discipline within modern linguistics, has gained substantial recognition as an important research field. By analyzing recurring patterns of behavior in natural communication contexts, CA aims to uncover the intricate dynamics of interactions between participants. Scholars such as Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson, Firth, Wagner, Seedhouse, and Markee have contributed valuable insights from various perspectives, establishing CA as a highly influential theoretical framework and analytical tool for studying classroom discourse.

Over the past decades, researchers of teacher development and classroom discourse have advocated studying classroom interactions as a means to understand the actual processes involved in teaching and learning activities between teachers and second language (L2) learners. The goal is to develop a deeper understanding of second language acquisition (SLA). Numerous studies have applied the methodology of CA within English as a Second Language

or Foreign Language (ESL or EFL) contexts, suggesting its potential integration into communicative-oriented L2 classrooms (e.g., Barraja-Rohan, 2011; Gardner, 2019; Hall, 2019; Hellermann, 2007; Kunitz et al., 2021; Markee, 2000; Sert & Jacknick, 2015; Wong & Waring, 2010).

While previous research has primarily focused on using CA as a methodology for analyzing classroom discourse, limited attention has been given to examining the feasibility and efficacy of employing CA as a pedagogical approach in second language teaching. Particularly, the role of repair, an essential aspect of modifying, organizing, and maintaining conversation, warrants further investigation. Moreover, there is a need for additional research to explore how a conversational analytic approach would influence L2 interaction in specific contexts, such as East Asian EFL settings.

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of explicit CA-informed instruction in enhancing English conversation performance in Chinese EFL classroom settings. It can provide insights into the interactional mechanisms of communicatively oriented language classrooms, where both meaningful communication and language learning are facilitated. The present research intends to answer the following research questions:

1. How does explicit CA-informed instruction contribute to enhancing L2 learners' interactional competence within an EFL classroom setting?
2. How does explicit CA-informed instruction influence learners' attitudes toward English language learning and its interactional features?

Literature review

Conversation Analysis

CA studies social interaction, challenging the prevailing theoretical assumptions of structural-functionalism developed in the late 1960s. Developed by Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson, and their colleagues within the broader field of sociology in the United States, CA drew inspiration from Goffman's interactional approach and Garfinkel's ethnomethodology theory (Heritage, 2005, pp. 103-105). In contrast to structural-functionalists' emphasis on the stability of cultural patterns, CA scholars highlighted the incidental and emergent nature of interaction (Drew, 2005).

Seedhouse (2004, p. 45) describes CA as "a dynamic, empirical, emic, bottom-up approach" that primarily focuses on the organization of social life as observed in daily interactions. By closely examining the intricate details of naturally occurring social interactions in everyday life, CA unveils the orderliness that social members systematically co-construct through their interactions. This orderliness is not imposed by external structures but rather emerges from the participants' own interactional practices and methods.

CA encompasses both a form of literature and a method of inquiry. From a methodological perspective, CA is grounded in the detailed analysis of naturally occurring interactions, with the primary aim of identifying patterns and regularities in the organization of talk-in-interaction. As established in foundational works by Sacks et al. (1974), as well as methodological guidelines by Seedhouse (2004), CA relies on the meticulous examination of recorded data, transcription, and qualitative analysis of interactional sequences. CA regards language and collateral actions as resources for carrying out social interactions, not merely

transmitting information (Schegloff et al., 2002). Furthermore, CA analyzes participants' utterances from a sequential perspective, considering their position within the interaction rather than isolating them as independent linguistic units. CA is a grounded research methodology conducted solely based on what participants display during their talk and how they react to interlocutors' talk (Seedhouse, 2004). It focuses on patterns of utterances, not thoughts or beliefs. Consequently, CA researchers repeatedly examine audio or video recordings and transcripts of naturally occurring interactions to reveal participants' orientations embodied in the details of their talk and actions.

CA provides a framework for studying both ordinary conversation and institutional talk (ten Have, 1999). While the CA founders' initial interest in ordinary conversation has dominated subsequent studies, there has also been a growing concentration on analyzing patterns of institutional talk. Findings from studies on ordinary conversation have elucidated fundamental practices in everyday social interaction, while research on institutional talk has provided in-depth analyses of interactional practices in various settings, such as news interviews, doctor-patient interactions, courtroom interactions, and classroom interactions (ten Have, 1999, p. 8).

Within the framework of CA, the organization of talk-in-interaction is governed by three fundamental principles: turn-taking, sequence organization, and repair (Schegloff et al., 2002). Turn-taking regulates the construction and allocation of turns among participants during a conversation. Sequence organization, as described by Schegloff (2007), serves as the "vehicle" through which activities are accomplished via turns-at-talk (p. 2). The principle of repair enables individuals to address troubles in speaking and hearing that may impede their shared understanding of the ongoing interaction (Schegloff, 2007). During their turns-at-talk, interlocutors coordinate the presentation and formulation of both the topic under discussion and the projection of potential next turns based on the current action (Schegloff et al., 2002). When misunderstandings arise, interlocutors invoke repair procedures to rectify or repair (Schegloff, 2007). Repair practices can vary depending on who initiates the repair (self-initiated or other-initiated) and who completes it (self-repair or other-repair). While repair can involve explicit error correction when necessary for sustaining mutual understanding, research has shown that repair is regularly employed even in the absence of apparent errors, and that errors in talk may sometimes remain uncorrected (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008).

CA for SLA

CA research has extended beyond the study of native speakers' talk to encompass non-native speakers' interactions. CA's microanalysis of naturally occurring data through detailed transcripts is well-suited for investigating the mechanisms underlying non-native speaker talk. Unlike ethnomethodology, which examines data from an etic perspective through interviews and narratives, CA adopts an emic perspective, exploring how L2 speakers themselves orient to their interlocutors and unfolding the mechanisms of their conversation learning processes.

Within the CA-SLA domain, there have been criticisms regarding the heavy emphasis on cognitive aspects over sociocultural aspects of language learning in SLA research. Researchers such as Firth and Wagner (1997), Seedhouse (2004), and Markee (2005) have demonstrated CA as a *methodological* tool that can help researchers focus on issues and aspects of second-language interaction that have been marginalized by mainstream SLA studies. They have argued that using CA can lead SLA researchers to recognize more social and interactional

dimensions of language use and examine L2 learning processes with a more empirical and grounded method.

Firth and Wagner (1997) highlight the imbalance between cognitive and social, sociocultural routes in SLA research, calling for more attention to the significance of interactional and contextual dimensions of language use and more studies in this area. They also critique the stereotyped view of non-native speakers as defective communicators, measured against the criterion of native speakers. Instead, their study acknowledges L2 speakers' status as competent communicators in interaction and explicates the wide range of interactional resources they employ to participate in social practice (Firth & Wagner, 1997), well beyond their linguistic competence. While Kasper (1997) asserts that socially situated studies of L2 use have little to say regarding language acquisition, she concludes that the microanalysis of CA can be incorporated into the sociocultural approach to SLA, helping reconstruct the link between L2 discourse and the acquisition of communicative competence (Kasper, 1997).

Moreover, by adopting CA as a *pedagogical* approach to second-language interactions, Gardner and Wagner (2005) challenge the prevailing perspective of non-native speakers as deficient communicators. Instead, they suggest that L2 learners' participation in conversations is an interactional achievement, focusing on how they use their comparatively limited linguistic resources in the second language to achieve successful outcomes as equal, rather than deficient, participants in the social world. The microanalysis of CA provides a detailed description of how teaching and potential learning develop in conversations.

Markee's (2008) study proposes a learning behavior-tracking methodology that aims to systematically investigate the relationship between interactional practices and language learning opportunities. It involves meticulously analyzing conversational data to identify and track specific learning behaviors, such as repair sequences, instances of negotiation for meaning, and the use of interactional resources. By closely examining these learning behaviors in their sequential contexts, Markee's approach enables researchers to gain insights into the intricate interactional processes that facilitate or hinder language learning. This study contributes to the development of CA-for-SLA as a research methodology, providing a framework for systematically analyzing and understanding the interactional mechanisms that underlie language development.

Eskildsen and Theodórsdóttir (2017) explore L2 learning spaces inside and outside the classroom, while Eskildsen (2019) investigates learning behaviors in the wild, focusing on how people achieve L2 learning in naturally occurring conversations beyond formal settings. These studies employ CA to analyze how learners and their interlocutors collaboratively create and navigate learning opportunities through interactional practices such as repair, clarification requests, and scaffolding. Eskildsen (2019) unveils the complex ecology of L2 interaction in the wild, revealing how learners actively engage in various learning behaviors like repair sequences, negotiation of meaning, and co-construction of knowledge. These studies challenge the notion that language learning primarily occurs in classrooms and highlight the potential for learning embedded in everyday conversations.

The concept of repair, the focus of the present study, as one of the fundamental principles of talk-in-interaction, has also gained attention in the field of SLA, particularly through the lens of CA. Hall (2007) emphasizes the importance of reexamining the roles of correction and repair in SLA research. Traditionally, these processes were viewed as mechanisms for addressing

errors or deficiencies in learners' language production. However, CA offers a more nuanced perspective, treating repair as a collaborative and interactional phenomenon that facilitates mutual understanding and learning opportunities. Hall argues that this shift in perspective has important implications for language teaching and learning, as it highlights the co-constructed nature of language development and the potential of repair sequences to create valuable learning experiences. Similarly, Seedhouse's (2004) meticulous analysis of classroom discourse demonstrates how repair sequences, along with other interactional practices such as turn-taking and sequence organization, shape the learning environment and contribute to the co-construction of knowledge and language development.

Conversation Analysis and Second Language Speakers' Interaction

Conversations between L2 speakers have been the focus of some CA studies. Since L2 interaction involves participants with varying linguistic competencies, researchers have attempted to analyze conversations between L2 speakers and examine their linguistic structure, both in pedagogical and non-pedagogical L2 settings. Over the past fifteen years, there have been numerous CA-informed studies applying CA to understand the characteristics and organization of L2 interaction in or outside of L2 classrooms (e.g., Chen & Cui, 2012; Duran et al., 2022; Ekin et al., 2024; Gardner & Wagner, 2005; Hasegawa, 2019; Kasper, 2004; Seedhouse, 2004; Stone, 2019; Wong, 2000a, 2000b).

In one study, Wong (2000a) discusses how L2 speakers initiate repair on L1 speakers' talk. Specifically, she uses CA to examine excerpts where L2 speakers' repair initiation is delayed within the next turn of the trouble-source talk. Her comparison of turn constructions indicates that cases in L1 speakers' conversations occur due to the L1 interlocutor's prematurely claimed understanding without sufficient time to complete a proper analysis of the prior turn. In contrast, the delay in her examples possibly involves L2 speakers' not-yet-mature understanding due to their lack of proficiency in the language (Wong, 2000a).

Wong's (2000b) study on self-initiated repair by L2 speakers during interaction provides valuable insights into the unique interactional practices employed by language learners, specifically the use of the token "yeah" in relation to repair sequences. Wong demonstrates that "yeah" often serves as a preface to self-initiated repair, allowing speakers to hold the conversational floor while formulating their repair. It doesn't initiate repair itself but rather signals the speaker's awareness of a problem and their intention to address it. Similarly, Atar et al. (2022) investigate the use of the token "okay" in combination with type-specific questions as a resource for shaping learner contributions in an SLA context, though its function differs from "yeah" in repair sequences.

Jung (1999) specifically investigates the organization of repair sequences in second-language classrooms. Through detailed analysis of classroom interactions, Jung identifies various types of repair initiations (self-initiated or other-initiated) and repair outcomes (self-repair or other-repair). The study reveals the complex interactional dynamics involved in addressing troubles in understanding and maintaining the flow of communication in language learning contexts. Jung's findings highlight the importance of considering the sequential organization of repair sequences and their potential impact on learners' participation, engagement, and language development.

CA-Informed Pedagogical Approach in Second Language Classroom

Shifting the focus from L2 speakers to L2 learners, a few CA studies have examined how interactional practices are organized in second-language pedagogical settings, revealing the pedagogical orders and the particular working of conversation in the classroom. These studies analyze actual student performances during classroom activities, allowing language teachers to critically reflect on and refine their instructional approaches based on empirical evidence (Wong & Waring, 2010). For example, Jeong et al. (2020) incorporate authentic dialogues and scenarios reflecting CA findings, bridging CA with Korean as foreign language instruction, making L2 learning engaging and reflective of real-life language use.

A growing body of research specifically explores how CA can inform teaching practices in ESL/EFL classrooms. Studies demonstrate that analyzing authentic conversational data can enhance second language pedagogy, either by integrating such data as instructional materials exemplifying real-world language use or by adopting a CA-informed pedagogical approach that explicitly teaches interactional competencies employed by proficient speakers and listeners (e.g., Barraja-Rohan, 2011; Hellermann, 2007).

Adopting a CA perspective, Barraja-Rohan (2011) illustrates how analyzing transcripts of naturally occurring conversations can raise learners' metacognitive awareness about the mechanisms and norms governing spoken interaction. Through engaging with such data, students develop skills for conversational analysis and become more effective communicators. The specific interactional features addressed should align with learners' proficiency levels. While focused on adult ESL students, this work provides a framework for teaching interactional competence using CA methodology.

Hellermann's (2007) longitudinal study further evidences how low-level adult ESL learners enhance their interactional competence over time through classroom practices like opening pair-work tasks. Tracking the same student pairs across 18-27 months, he found they increasingly integrated language modeled by the teacher and peers into their own discursive routines for managing interaction. This highlights CA's utility for investigating the developmental trajectory of L2 interactional skills.

Moreover, CA also facilitates in-depth exploration of specific language learning processes that have proven difficult to capture through traditional SLA research methods. Markee (2000) employed CA to reconstruct how a learner incidentally acquired the vocabulary item "coral" during a peer interaction activity. By analyzing the turns of talk, he traced the precise moment the learner demonstrated comprehension and integrated the new word, exemplifying CA's capacity to shed light on the micro-processes of language development. Lilja and Piirainen-Marsh (2019) investigate situated language learning through CA, focusing on an experiential teacher-led activity. The study presents a threefold pedagogical model that includes preparing for, engaging in, and reflecting on real-world service interactions. When beginner L2 learners share their stories, it naturally steers the conversation towards language development. This process, highlighting and interacting with learning techniques, uncovers a collaborative effort towards learning. The study also points out the significance of incorporating real-life experiences into classroom discussions, aligning with innovative teaching methods aimed at facilitating naturalistic 'learning in the wild'. Harmonious with the present study, Cho and Larke (2010) explored the repair strategies used by primary elementary ESL students in classroom settings. Through analyzing classroom interaction data, they identified various repair strategies employed by young learners, such as self-initiated and other-initiated repair. Eskildsen and Wagner (2013) explored the role of recurring and shared gestures in L2 classrooms through a

CA-informed approach, analyzing video recordings of classroom interactions and the embodied practices of teachers and students. Their study found that certain gestures, like pointing or iconic gestures, were frequently shared among participants during language learning activities. These gestures primarily serve as interactional resources that facilitate meaning co-construction and language development, rather than being repair strategies themselves. However, they can be supportive of repair processes by enhancing communication and mutual understanding, potentially preventing the need for verbal repair or assisting in its execution when necessary.

In addition to the language learning process, CA has uncovered effective error correction techniques in classroom contexts. Across lessons from 11 countries, Seedhouse (2004) identified eight mitigated feedback strategies teachers commonly use when prioritizing form and accuracy, such as indirect error indication, partial repetition, or prompting peer repair. This panoramic analysis exemplifies how CA can derive pedagogical insights into error treatment applicable across diverse instructional settings. Koshik (2002) explores a unique pedagogical practice known as "designedly incomplete utterances," which teachers often employ to elicit knowledge displays and initiate repair sequences during error correction. This study sheds light on the strategic use of repair as a teaching tool, facilitating learners' active participation and engagement in the co-construction of knowledge and language development. Koshik's research demonstrates how teachers can intentionally design their utterances to create opportunities for learners to initiate repair, thereby promoting their interactional competence and language skills. This pedagogical approach aligns with the principles of CA, emphasizing the collaborative and interactional nature of language learning.

Finally, CA has shed light on the authenticity of classroom tasks by examining how learners actually engage with them. Mori's (2004) analysis of a role-play task in a Japanese classroom found learners sometimes treated it as an individual writing exercise rather than an interactive exchange by avoiding eye contact and referring to the board. Paradoxically, more authentic interaction emerged when learners negotiated real problems like understanding instructions. Such findings suggest the need to investigate the contextual factors that facilitate or constrain truly communicative practice during tasks. In a word, the micro-perspective of CA on the details of classroom interaction yields invaluable insights into second language learning processes, effective teaching techniques, task design, and more, ultimately informing more authentic, learner-centered instruction.

CA-Informed Teaching Instrument

In addition to CA-informed pedagogical approaches, there has been growing interest in developing language teaching and learning materials informed by CA findings. CA research has highlighted the discrepancy between dialogues presented in textbooks and naturally occurring conversations, both in ordinary and institutional interactions. Wong's (2002) study exemplifies how CA data can expose this gap. By analyzing telephone dialogues in eight textbooks, Wong discovered that the examples did not accurately reflect the typical sequence patterns found in naturally occurring telephone conversations in American English, such as summons-answer, identification-recognition, greetings, and "how are you" sequences. Wong (2002) noted that these sequences were "absent, incomplete or problematic" (p. 37) in the inauthentic phone conversations presented in the ESL textbooks examined. This suggests that CA research findings, like these sequence types, can inform the design of more authentic language teaching materials.

Considering the potential mismatch between the organization of sequences in naturally occurring conversations and dialogues in textbooks, CA-informed materials are in place to bridge the gap. Huth and Taleghani-Nikazm (2006) analyzed naturally occurring conversations between native and non-native speakers of German, focusing on specific pragmatic features such as openings and closings in telephone conversations and interactional practices like turn-taking and sequence organization. They developed CA-informed teaching materials and activities aimed at raising learners' awareness of these pragmatic features and interactional practices. The researchers implemented these CA-informed materials in L2 German classrooms and observed positive outcomes. Learners demonstrated improved awareness and understanding of pragmatic norms and interactional practices, as well as enhanced ability to apply these skills in their own interactions.

Barraja-Rohan's (2011) study exemplifies how CA-informed materials can improve learners' interactional competence by teaching adjacency pairs. The comparison of pre and post-instruction conversations demonstrated overt interactional competence improvement, and the CA concepts taught provided learners with knowledge of sociocultural norms.

In sum, CA data and findings of CA-informed studies are both considered authentic materials to teach interactional competence as well as valuable sources to explicate the structure of conversations and vocabulary in the CA data. However, existing studies often rely on language proficiency interviews or formal institutional talk for data analysis (e.g., Kimura et al., 2018; Teng & Sinwongsuwat, 2015; Wong & Waring, 2010; Zainil & Arsyad, 2021). In second-language classrooms and tutorials, assessment methods should better reflect real-life situations and resonate with natural conversations. Johnson and Tyler (1998) argue that in natural conversations, topics, turn distribution, order, and length are mutually negotiated, whereas in interviews, these elements are primarily controlled by the interviewer, lacking spontaneity and authenticity, which may hinder the assessment of interactional competence.

All in all, CA holds significant potential for enhancing second language materials and pedagogy. CA findings illuminate valuable insights for teachers' instructional practices in classrooms and tutorial settings. However, there are limitations to existing research on CA-informed pedagogical approaches. Firstly, the body of CA research exploring EFL instructional practices across diverse contexts remains limited. Secondly, while language teachers are well-versed in grammar, phonology, and sociolinguistics, many lack adequate understanding of interactional practices. Moreover, current descriptions of how to teach conversation are often inadequate, either failing to reflect authentic conversational patterns or lacking sufficient detail to guide teachers on the intricacies of how conversation operates. To fully leverage the benefits of CA for language instruction, further research is needed to expand investigations into CA-informed pedagogy across varied EFL contexts, develop teacher training on interactional competence, and provide more comprehensive descriptions of effective methods for teaching conversational skills that align with naturally occurring talk.

Method

Settings and Participants

The present study was conducted in a private foreign language institute in eastern China. The student participants were all elementary-to-intermediate English learners with L1 Mandarin. Their learning objectives are mainly concerned with using the language appropriately as a communicational tool in English-speaking countries within a time period of half to one year.

All the student participants were recruited through presentations outlining the research and the potential benefits given by the researcher and attended this study on a voluntary basis. At the preliminary stage of the study, nine students were registered for the research program and completed an IELTS (The International English Language Testing System) speaking mock test as a placement test, after which eight participants were selected to attend all phases of the research (as shown in Table 1). Three students were male and five were female, aged from 18 to 27 years old. The program included 32 hours of training with a language focus on verbal interactional skills. There were two teachers in this research program. The recruitment was based on their willingness to participate and their availability during the research. At the time of this study, both teachers had acquired Master’s degrees in the area of TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) from English-speaking countries and had at least three years of teaching experience.

Table 1. Descriptive Data of the Student Participants

Student (pseudonym)	Gender	Major / Job Field
Emily	Female	Apparel Design
Emma	Female	Physics
Oliver	Male	Business
Lucy	Female	Business
Matthew	Male	UI Design
Lilian	Female	Computer Science
Jamie	Female	French
Daniel	Male	Mechanical Engineering

Instruments

The procedures of this study mainly involve two kinds of instruments: the instructional material and the evaluation system. As stated in the literature review, ‘*Beyond Talk*’, the instructional material used in Barraja-Rohan’s (2011) study served as a valuable source of authentic material since the textbook units were specifically designed to teach interactional competence and CA concepts. The textbook units had previously been implemented and evaluated, demonstrating their effectiveness in providing learners with theoretical knowledge and practical skills related to interactional competence and CA concepts (Barraja-Rohan & Pritchard, 1997). Therefore, the author adapted several units of this textbook into handouts as instructional material in the current research. These handouts were prepared following *Conversation Analysis and Second Language Pedagogy* by Wong and Waring (2010) as well (see Appendix A). The student participants were taught CA concepts through these handouts and conversation activities were completed in class. Instructions were in English, with both verbal and written instructions given to help ensure understanding.

To evaluate participants’ performance in spoken interactions and the efficacy of explicit CA-informed teaching approach, a specific evaluation system was developed for this study. Unlike traditional speaking tests, which are commonly in the format of interviews, in the current study,

we strived to design an evaluation system that mirrors real-life speaking situations, not unequal social encounters. In the present study, the author adopted an alternative to the traditional interview format in order to create a natural and less interviewer-dominated schemata. Student participants are examined in pairs, so that each student has another student for a partner during the test; the teacher is only an assessor, which is adapted from the paired testing format in Brooks (2009). There are several advantages of using this test format. First, test takers are socially equal, which not only ensures a degree of comfort for the student participants but also allows them to express themselves more freely, and more interactional skills could be depicted. Secondly, peer interaction is much closer to real-life conversation than an interview in that 1) they typically communicate with other student participants after class and 2) when they will have a real-life conversation in English, it will likely be with whom they must speak to as a social equal. Another advantage to student pairs is that it is easy for them to find common ground on the topic and move forward with the conversation. Hence, this peer partner test format has a high degree of authenticity as it closely resembles a real-life conversation.

Data Collection

In the current study, the author adopted both quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test measurement and conversation analysis to examine student participants' oral performance regarding interactional competence. According to Dörnyei (2007), combining these two well-established methods of analysis has the potential to collectively provide a more triangulated account of instructional practices than that given by adopting either one on its own. From this combined analysis, the researcher is able to gain more useful insights into the ways in which, on one hand, CA strategies play a role in students' utterance and, on the other hand, CA-informed instruction affects their overall oral performance.

Two pairs of students conversed at the same time, which extended the duration of observation. By having two conversations going simultaneously, the students can feel that they are not the sole focus of the test, thus lessening performance tension. Figure 1 demonstrates the testing format used in both pre-test and post-test. The student participants were divided into two groups of four (letters A to H in Figure 1 refer to the eight student participants).

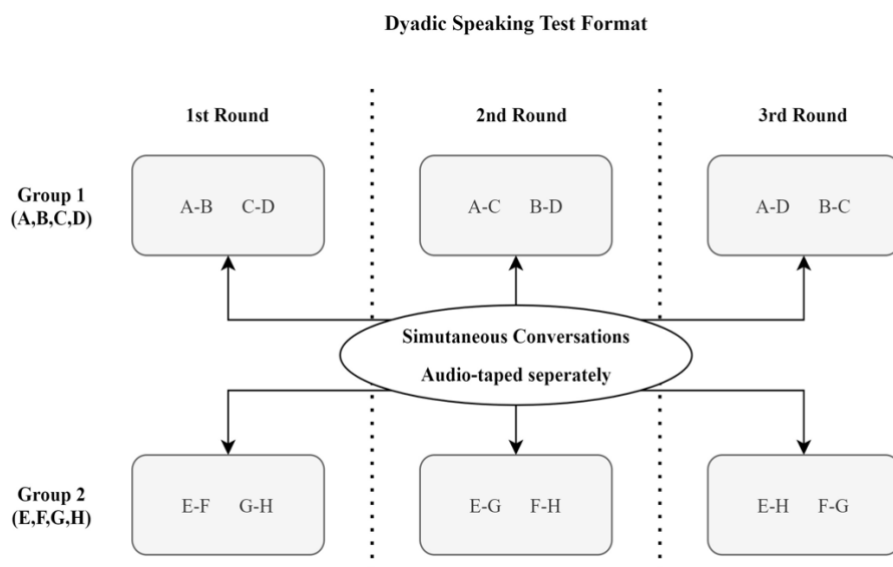


Figure 1. Pre-test/post-test didactic speaking format

Each student participated in three conversations with three different partners. The teacher acted as an observer, ensuring the integrity of the testing process but did not participate as an interlocutor. The topic of the three conversations was not restricted by the researcher for the purpose of inducing more natural conversations. However, a list of common conversation topics adapted from the IELTS Speaking Test Part 1 was provided for the students for reference. The testing process was audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

During the CA-informed instruction process, each student participant was required to keep a learner journal after each lesson, which is a collection of perceptions, reflections, feelings, and other relevant materials. When the instructional phase was finished, the researcher collected the learner as qualitative data.

Data Analysis

The dyadic speaking test was scored by two raters. The scoring criteria and descriptors for the assessment were adapted from those set out by Barraja-Rohan (2011) were employed. An evaluation sheet was given to the two raters to rate each student's performance and descriptors for the assessment were employed with a focus on four different aspects of speaking: topic development and cohesion, lexical range and accuracy, grammatical range and accuracy, and pronunciation. The raters included a non-native speaker and a native speaker of English with ESL teaching experience. The non-native rater also had substantial exposure to English in a native-speaking context. The evaluation sheet used by the raters was composed of a 5-point scale: 1= very poor/unacceptable; 2= poor; 3= average; 4= good and 5= excellent. The participant's scores from the two raters were averaged to derive a composite score, which was then considered the participant's final score. To guarantee the reliability of the rating process, inter-rater reliability was assessed using an online statistical tool (Spring, 2022). Specifically, Cronbach's alpha was calculated, resulting in a value of $\alpha = 0.82$, which is considered acceptable for inter-rater reliability according to Plonsky and Derrick (2016). This approach confirmed that the averaged scores reflected participants' performance on both the pre-test and post-test, ensuring that the results were based on a systematic and consistent evaluation process rather than on subjective judgment alone.

The scores obtained from the two raters in the pre-test and post-test dyadic speaking test were statistically computed to arrive at the mean and standard deviation. Due to the continuous and normal nature of the data as checked by a Shapiro-Wilk Test (Spring, 2022), dependent *t*-tests were run to determine significant differences in the students' conversation performance before and after the instruction. Additionally, a close CA analysis of the audio-recorded interactions was conducted to verify performance differences between the pre-test and post-test. The interactions were transcribed following the transcription convention adapted from Atkinson and Heritage (1984), ten Have (1999), and Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008) (see Appendix B).

A qualitative thematic analysis and content analysis were employed to examine the learning journal entries. The qualitative analysis process involved inductively coding, categorizing codes into broader themes and patterns, employing constant comparison across entries and participants, independent coding by two coders to ensure reliability, and interpreting the identified themes in relation to the research questions.

Results and Discussion

Quantitative Findings

A dependent *t*-test was conducted to compare student participants' oral performance in pre-test and post-test. As shown in Table 2, the results from the pre-test and post-test indicate that the 4-week CA-informed instruction resulted in a statistically significant improvement in students' overall oral performance, as well as each sub-component. These effect sizes, which Plonsky and Oswald (2014) categorized as indicating small to medium effects ($d = 0.4$ to $d = 0.7$), demonstrate moderate improvements across different aspects of performance, while the overall effect size is large ($d = 1.0$).

Table 2. Performance Differences Before and After CA-informed Instruction

Aspects	Pre-test		Post-test		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect Size (<i>d</i>)
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
Grammar	2.60	0.58	2.89	0.20	-4.256	7	0.004	0.89
Lexis	2.62	0.61	2.96	0.61	-4.027	7	0.005	0.59
Pronunciation	2.37	0.74	2.89	0.56	-2.705	7	0.030	0.69
Topic	2.42	0.81	2.89	0.57	-4.147	7	0.004	0.75
Total	10.01	1.71	11.64	1.47	-6.223	7	0.000	1.02

Note. In column *Aspects*, *Grammar* represents grammatical range and accuracy; *Lexis* represents lexical range and accuracy; *Pronunciation* represents pronunciation; *Topic* represents topic development and cohesion.

The statistical results of the present study confirmed that explicit CA-informed conversation instruction can significantly enhance L2 learners' overall conversation abilities. This finding aligns with previous research highlighting the potential of CA-informed pedagogical approaches in developing learners' interactional competence (Barraja-Rohan, 2011; Hellermann, 2007). By analyzing authentic conversational data and applying CA principles, learners in the current study were able to develop a deeper understanding of the intricate mechanisms governing spoken interactions, such as turn-taking, repair sequences, and conversational strategies.

While the CA-informed instruction in the current study focused primarily on developing learners' understanding of conversational organization and interactional competence, the findings indicate that integrating explicit instruction on phonetic features and their interactional functions could further enhance learners' overall conversational abilities. This aligns with Jung's (1999) study, which examined the organization of repair sequences in L2 classrooms, highlighting the intricate interplay between linguistic competence and interactional practices in facilitating mutual understanding and language development.

As the students were engaged in the analysis of a model conversation explicitly taught through each CA-informed lesson, they demonstrated an understanding of how a conversation is sequentially organized, how different social actions are constructed through turns, and how they can use different resources to maneuver through L2 conversation more naturally, appropriately respond to their interlocutors' turns with a wide range of vocabulary and structures, and make themselves understood more accurately.

able to use a wide range of structures and expressions in her turn construction as well as deploy such discourse markers as *oh* and *hmm* to acknowledge new information and reserve turn space to keep the interaction going smoothly (see lines 3-6). By not taking a full turn at the possible completion points (line 3), Emma showed the specific understanding that an extended unit of talk was underway, thereby inviting Emily to continue, which ensured ongoing mutual understanding.

Excerpt 3 (pre-test)

- 1 OLIVER: do you have a ↑pet?
- 2 LUCY: no, uh (.5) not: now, but: I had a lovely cat (.) s-several
 years ago.
- 3 OLIVER: ↑ really?
- 4 LUCY: yeh. it's so CUTE. (.) uh. it's <black (.4) with: (.) yellow
5 stripes>, uh, (.8) and kind of fat
6 (1.5)
- 7 OLIVER: actually I'm (.) a little afraid of cat, but sometimes my
8 friends (.5) they will (.3) arrange parties at cat coffee
 house.
- 9 LUCY: ↑ oh (.) sounds interesting.
- 10 OLIVER: ↓ not at all! I °have to leave° early every time.
- 11 LUCY: oh so poor YOU.

In this interaction, Oliver initiated a turn asking about pets at line 1 and then at line 3, a confirmation-seeking sequence. Lucy's responses to her interlocutor's question were delivered in a complex turn (line 2, 4-5). At line 7, Oliver first waited for a sign to reciprocate or a pre-closing, and then he shifted the topic and introduced his experience. This aligns with findings from former studies that Mandarin speakers would wait longer to produce a response token than English speakers (Wong & Waring, 2010). Although Lucy's response was simply structured with basic question-answer sequences with fillers *uh* (line 2, 4), the good point is that she could produce assessment tokens like *oh*, *so poor*, to show her interest and attentive listening to her conversation partner (line 9, 11).

Excerpt 4 (post-test)

- 1 EMILY: have you seen the new TV series (.) about (.) ↑ spy?
 2 LUCY: which one: do you ↓ mean?
 3 EMILY: the one (.5) uh (.3) in which (.) pete plays a ↓ bad guy (.)
 for the ↓ first time.
 5 LUCY: pete plays a ↓ bad [guy?
 6 EMILY: [ummhmm.
 7 LUCY: tell me abou:t i:t.
 8 EMILY: you ↓ should watch it! I strongly recommend it- to you.
 9 LUCY: and that's ↑ because?
 10 EMILY: I love him (.3) as an act(h)or.

After the instruction, Lucy evidently spoke with fewer fillers such as *uh*, which improves her fluency (see lines 2-9). This excerpt also presents her progress on sequence. She first started a confirmation-seeking sequence (lines 2-5) and then appropriately initiated a request sequence to ask for more information (line 7). What is more, she was more involved than in Excerpt 3 and was able to promptly reciprocate their interlocutor's turns by eliciting her interlocutor's answer (line 9).

The qualitative findings align with previous research highlighting the potential of CA-informed approaches in developing learners' interactional competence (Eskildsen & Theodórsdóttir, 2017; Eskildsen, 2019). By analyzing authentic conversational data and applying CA principles, learners in the current study were able to enhance their understanding and application of various interactional practices, such as turn-taking, repair sequences, and conversational strategies.

The observed improvements in participants' abilities to respond promptly, use discourse markers effectively, and engage in smooth turn-taking sequences resonate with Eskildsen and Theodórsdóttir's (2017) concept of "constructing L2 learning spaces." Through the CA-informed instruction, learners were equipped with the interactional resources and competencies necessary to create and navigate learning opportunities within conversational contexts, both inside and outside the classroom.

Furthermore, the reduction in the use of fillers and the development of more complex turn-taking sequences, as demonstrated by participants like Lucy, align with Cho and Larke's (2010) findings on the repair strategies employed by ESL learners. By analyzing and practicing repair sequences and conversational strategies, learners in the current study were able to enhance their interactional competence, which manifested in more fluent and coherent conversational exchanges.

The qualitative results also highlight the potential of CA-informed approaches in bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world language use, as suggested by Lilja and Piirainen-Marsh (2019). By analyzing authentic conversational data and practicing interactional skills, learners in the current study seemed better prepared to navigate the complexities of natural conversations and transfer their interactional competence to diverse communicative contexts. As suggested by Sert (2010), while enabling teachers to become more aware of their own classroom language use and language teaching, CA-informed instruction

can also empower learners to become more active and take better control of their own learning by being analytical of the language they learn and the language they use.

Learner's Attitude Towards CA-informed approach. Through the learner journal that student participants were required to keep during the instruction stage, four participants stated that CA was helpful for understanding the important principles of spontaneous conversation, while two believed that the natural-like conversations and analyses in handouts could be helpful in improving their comprehension skills.

Evidence from the learner journal also suggests that CA-informed language teaching is an effective way to help learners notice precise forms and functions of a target language. For example, one participant wrote, "I found that everyday conversation is in order, and I think that's also true for my mother tongue perhaps." and another pointed out that "The conversation we learned is a little different from textbook grammar." In fact, CA's key insight suggests that ordinary mundane speech can exhibit an extraordinary level of orderliness. This orderliness is not determined by innate cognitive structures of language; rather, it reflects a socially organized order of interpersonal action. Indeed, learners' knowledge of underlying linguistic competence seems ill-equipped to allow them to understand the observable orderliness of everyday interaction (Wooffitt, 2005, pp. 19-20). The finding also aligns with Barraja-Rohan's (2011) study, which demonstrated the effectiveness of using CA in the second language classroom to teach interactional competence. By exposing learners to authentic conversational data and guiding them through CA-based analyses, the current study facilitated learners' awareness of the intricate mechanisms governing real-life interactions.

The content analysis results underscored a positive shift in learners' attitudes towards the CA-informed approach, particularly regarding its impact on their pronunciation. Learners expressed that engaging in conversation analysis helped them comprehend and apply phonetic features during their conversations. However, the results also indicated that in the aspect of pronunciation, further improvement could be achieved if learners were not only engaged in analyzing conversations based on CA principles but also made aware of a wider range of phonetic features necessary to accomplish specific interactional goals through their turns at talk. This resonates with the findings of Wong (2000a, 2000b), suggesting that L2 speakers may employ distinct interactional resources and strategies to navigate conversational challenges, which could potentially impact their pronunciation or fluency.

It is worthy to note that some participants reported a more positive attitude toward English learning. One said, "English seems more interesting to me because I learned how to 'really' use it in daily life. It's not just boring letters." Overall, participants' attitudes toward CA and toward their second language became more positive as a result of the CA-informed approach adopted in this study.

Conclusion

This study investigated the feasibility of applying CA to language teaching; specifically, using CA as a pedagogical tool in an EFL classroom to enhance L2 learners' interactional competence. The results show that participants responded positively to explicit CA-informed instruction. CA helped learners both to overcome certain psychological barriers to language learning and to notice a number of aspects of L2 interaction that otherwise may have escaped them (e.g., hesitation in responding, lack of confidence in interactions, and difficulty in maintaining conversational flow). The statistical analysis findings corroborate previous studies'

assertions that the use of CA-informed conversation lessons can improve students' overall conversational performance. Consistent with Barraja-Rohan's (2011) findings, after four weeks of explicit CA-informed instruction, results showed that learners gained progress regarding knowledge and skills of interaction, language, interactional communication, and confidence in speaking English. The results strongly suggest that language teachers should reevaluate their exclusive reliance on non-CA-informed approaches and consider incorporating CA insights into their English language teaching practices. Knowledge and also practice of CA can provide teachers with a deeper understanding of the complexities of naturally occurring conversation complexities, equipping them with tools to increase students' conversation skills.

It is also noteworthy that participants in the present study reported gaining renewed interest in the English language, which is encouraging, considering that some participants were majoring in science, engineering, or another foreign language and initially showed relatively low interest in English. In fact, participants commented during the investigation that they enjoyed working with and analyzing conversational data so as to logically infer the behavioral patterns that English speakers orient to in any talk-in-interaction.

Despite the positive results, certain limitations need to be addressed in further studies. The assessment format and procedures should be improved to encourage more natural and authentic conversations. The rating rubric should also be revised to accommodate the assessment of more interactional features elucidated in the close analysis. Another limitation of this study was the absence of video recordings, which restricted our ability to analyze non-verbal communication and embodied actions that play a crucial role in interaction. Future research should consider incorporating video recordings to capture the full spectrum of interactional resources employed by participants. Additionally, it would be valuable to investigate if this CA-informed approach is equally effective with a wider range of proficiency levels and to apply these classroom practices to larger groups of learners to further understand the efficacy of CA on interactional competence development. Lastly, a delayed post-test could provide more robust statistical evidence for the findings by evaluating the retention of interactional skills over time, making this another avenue for future research to enhance the overall understanding of CA-informed pedagogy.

With these limitations to be handled, this paper strongly encourages EFL teachers to acquire CA knowledge and collaborate in developing CA-informed language lessons to enhance conversation performance of students with different levels of English proficiency. By closely examining classroom interactions, teachers will be better positioned to diagnose learners' specific language difficulties and evaluate the effectiveness of their instructional strategies. Therefore, CA can serve not just as a teaching and diagnostic tool but also as a useful tool for exploring the interactional architecture of their language classroom and identifying learners' language learning problems.

While this application of CA to L2 teaching is still in its nascent stage and requires further empirical validation, the present study offers encouraging evidence for the potential benefits of incorporating CA insights into language pedagogy. Echoing Seedhouse's (2011) call, more research is needed to explore the applicability of CA-informed teaching practices across a wider range of target languages, proficiency levels, instructional contexts, and classroom activities. Continued interdisciplinary collaboration between conversation analysts and language teachers is crucial for refining and optimizing the implementation of CA in language classrooms. Nonetheless, the findings reported here underscore the value of equipping

language teachers with CA knowledge and practice to enhance their understanding of the intricate dynamics of naturally-occurring talk, ultimately fostering learners' development of interactional competence. This study contributes to the growing body of literature advocating for a more conversation-analytic approach to second language pedagogy.

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Appendix A

A Sample CA-Informed Handout

Changing and Closing a Topic

When people have a conversation, they often change topics. Before going to the next activity, discuss with the class the following question:

What do you do to change the topic?

In this conversation, Rob and Fiona move from one topic to another. Answer the following questions to see how they did it so you could do it yourself too.

Activity E

Use the transcript and make sure you look at what comes before the line indicated in the question and the intonation.

1. At line 33, Fiona changes topic. How does she do that?
2. Was Rob surprised that she changed the topic? Look at what they say from lines 29 to 33 to explain your answer.
3. At line 37, the topic has moved from being late to the traffic. How did Fiona make this change of topic?
4. At line 43, the topic has moved again from the traffic to doctors overbooking patients. How does Rob make this change of topic?

CHANGING AND CLOSING A TOPIC	
CHANGING A TOPIC	CLOSING A TOPIC
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Linking the new topic back to the old topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using feedback tokens over several turns with a falling intonation such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- alright↓- yeah↓- okay↓
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using expressions to clearly indicate a new topic such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- actually- anyway- by the way- did you know- guess what?- changing the subject completely	

Appendix B

CA Transcription Conventions

Symbols	Description
(.)	Just noticeable pause
(.3), (2.6)	Examples of timed pauses
↑word,↓word	Onset of noticeable pitch rise or fall
A: word [word B: [word	Square brackets aligned across adjacent lines denote the start of overlapping talk.
.hh, hh	in-breath (note the preceding fullstop) and out-breath respectively.
wo(h)rd	(h) is a try at showing that the word has "laughter" bubbling within it
wor-	A dash shows a sharp cut-off
wo:rd	Colons show that the speaker has stretched the preceding sound.
(words)	A guess at what might have been said if unclear
()	Unclear talk
A: word= B: =word	The equals sign shows that there is no discernible pause between two speakers' turns or, if put between two sounds within a single speaker's turn, shows that they run together
<u>word</u> , WORD	Underlined sounds are louder, capitals louder still
°word°	material between "degree signs" is quiet
>word word< <word word>	Inwards arrows show faster speech, outward slower
→	Analyst's signal of a significant line
((<i>sniff</i>))	Transcriber's effort at representing something hard, or impossible, to write phonetically

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